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In acknowledgment of Cuban student-scientific journals in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic

Reconocimiento a las revistas científicas estudiantiles cubanas en medio de la pandemia por la COVID-19

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) emerged in December 2019 in Hubei province, China.(1)It has spread throughout the world, causing innumerable deaths and affecting different social sectors. Such elements have raised concerns in the scientific community, which has rapidly developed research to close knowledge gaps. As a result, there has been a growth in scientific production and, consequently, a true revolution in the editing and publication processes.

During this context Cuban student-scientific journals are working, which despite the confinement and the different obstacles imposed by the current situation, the editorial staff of these journals have carried out a publication process of quality. To this end, medical science students have been given an active role, working as producers and assessors of science.

Over the years, Student-scientific Journals have played an essential role in the process of dissemination of science. At present, Cuba has a Student-scientific Journal in each university of medical sciences: Universidad Médica Pinaré (Pinar del Río), 16 de Abril (Havana), MedEst (Matanzas), Inmedsur (Cienfuegos), Scalpelo (Villa Clara), SPIMED (Sancti Spiritus), CienciMed (Ciego de Avila), Progalenos (Camagüey), EsTuSalud (Las Tunas), Holcien (Holguín), 2 de diciembre (Granma), Unimed (Santiago de Cuba), Gaceta Médica Estudiantil (Guantánamo).(2) Many of these have carried out an arduous work in the updating and socialization of science concerning the novel coronavirus, placing the medical students in a position beyond their community task.

From the INFOMED website, the portal of each of the Student-scientific Journals registered in the National Registry of Serial Publications (RNPS) was accessed on August 11th, 2020. Articles present in published issues were accessed, as well as in the "Forthcoming Articles" and "Next Issue" sections. A total of 39 scientific articles related to COVID 19 were identified, which were distributed according to editorial section (Figure 1). There were 15 publications in Universidad Médica Pinaré, 14 in 16 de Abril, three articles in SPIMED journals and two articles in 2 de diciembre; while EsTuSalud, Unimed and Holcien and Gaceta Médica Estudiantil presented one article each. The rest of the journals are in the process of publishing articles related to COVID-19.

Both Universidad Médica Pinaré and 16 de Abril published articles in Spanish and English, the former 8 articles in both languages and 2 in English; while the latter published one in both languages and one in English. Universidad Médica Pinaré published 6 articles by foreign authors, including Peru, Brazil and El Salvador.

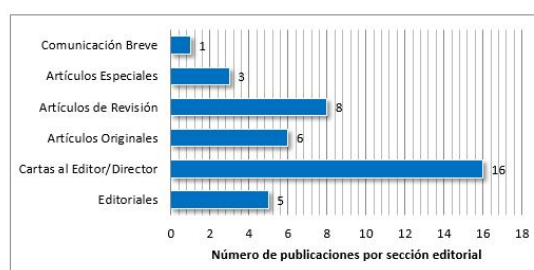


Figura 1. Número de publicaciones en revistas científicas estudiantiles distribuidas por sección editorial hasta el 11 de agosto de 2020

The editorial teams of Student-scientific Journals are mostly comprised of students, who in the current situation work from home, after carrying out research tasks(3) and in combination with their self-training as competent health care professionals throughout distance education.(4) Adding together their arduous task as researchers and assessors of science, that requires making an extra effort. This function is more difficult to be carried out by the requirement of conditions inherent to the editorial process, such as good computer technology and access to the Internet.

However, these limitations have not diminished the work of young physicians, who perform peer review, edit, correctness, and the continuous processing of scientific articles for their journals. In this way, they are able to take the scientific production to a higher position, also getting involved in evaluation and indexing processes in prestigious databases; publishing on time, with excellence, reaching to a superior number of articles than in previous stages in some of these journals.

It is disseminated in social networks, the science produced is evaluated through bibliometric studies and strategies are drawn up to improve quality and impact. At the same time, new models are implemented, and continuous updating is maintained in synergy with the international status of scientific journals. Useful information and tools are provided when dealing with Covid-19 pandemic, not only to the scientific community, but also to all social groups whose interest leads them to review the contents published in the journals.

Student scientific journals are showing themselves to be producers of science, capable of rapid growth, approaching the quality and impact of their counterparts directed by professionals. This should not be a hindrance to student journals, but an incentive to progress and development.

All this is an arduous and extremely committed task, requiring time, sacrifice and commitment to science. It is essential to recognize the work of the student- editorial teams, since the recognition for the good work motivates development. This letter is addressed to this aspect, in addition to encouraging medical science students to access to the research field, to be part of a useful task at the service of science and society.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares there is no conflict of interests.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

The author wrote by himself, revised and approved the final version of this letter.

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